

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows. The claims are in the format as required by 35 C.F.R. § 1.121.

1. (Currently Amended) A system for exchanging files in a network environment, comprising:

a first software agent ~~executed~~executing on a first user's computing system;
at least one additional software agent ~~executed~~executing on at least one additional user's computing system; and
an agent server to which said first software agent and said at least one additional software agent establish a connection when said first user's and said at least one additional user's computing systems log in to said network environment, ~~and~~ wherein said agent server directs said first software agent and said at least one additional software agent to establish a direct connection between said first user's and one of said at least one additional user's computing systems when files are to be shared between said first user's and said one of said at least one of additional user's computing systems, and wherein said agent server directs said first software agent and said at least one additional software agent based on at least one criterion.

2. (Currently Amended) The system for exchanging files in a network environment of Claim 1, wherein ~~said agent server receives a list of available files to be shared from said first user's and said at least one additional user's computing systems when said first user's and said at least one additional user's computing systems log in to said network environment.~~ said agent server directs said first software agent and said at least one additional software agent to establish a direct connection between said first user's and said one of said at least one additional user's computing systems in response to a file request from said first software agent and wherein said at least one additional software agent is directed to send said requested file directly to said first software agent.

3. (Cancelled) The system for exchanging files in a network environment of Claim 2, wherein when said agent server receives a file request from said first user, said agent server matches said request to at least one additional software agent having said requested file.

4. (Currently Amended) The system for exchanging files in a network environment of Claim ~~3~~1, wherein said agent server directs said first software agent and said at least one additional software agent ~~said match~~ is based on firewall type, subnet, network or non-USA country code, and/or connection speed in order to minimize file transfer time between said first software agent and said at least one additional software agent.

5. (Currently Amended) The system for exchanging files in a network environment of Claim ~~4~~1, wherein said agent server directs said first user's software agent to open a port on said first user's computing system to listen for a connection and file request from said at least one additional user's computing systems, and directs said at least one additional user's computing system to connect to said first user's computer system.

6. (Original) The system for exchanging files in a network environment of Claim 5, wherein if said first user's computing system receives an unexpected connection attempt or file request/transfer said open port is closed.

7. (Original) The system for exchanging files in a network environment of Claim 4, wherein said agent server directs said at least one additional user's software agent to open a port on said at least one additional user's computing system to listen for a connection and file request from said first user's computing systems, and directs said first user's computing system to connect to said at least one additional user's computer system.

8. (Original) The system for exchanging files in a network environment of Claim 5, wherein if said at least one additional user's computing system receives an unexpected connection attempt or file request/transfer said open port is closed.

9. (Original) The system for exchanging files in a network environment of Claim 1, wherein said network environment is an Internet.

10. (Original) The system for exchanging files in a network environment of Claim 1, wherein said first user's computing system serves as a client and said at least one additional computing system serves as a server to exchange said requested files.

11. (Original) The system for exchanging files in a network environment of Claim 1, wherein said first user's computing system serves as a server and said at least one additional computing system serves as a client to exchange said requested files.

12. (Original) The system for exchanging files in a network environment of Claim 1, wherein said first user makes said file request via a GUI linked to a web server coupled to server system operable to execute said agent server.

13. (Currently Amended) A method of exchanging files between users comprising the steps of:
executing a first software agent on a first user's computing system;
executing at least one additional software agent on at least one additional users computing system; and
executing an agent server on a network based computing system;
establishing a connection from said agent server to said first software agent and said at least one additional software agent when said first user's and said at least one additional user's computing systems log in to said network environment;
directing said first software agent and said at least one additional software agent to establish a direct connection between said first user's and one of said at least one additional user's computing systems when files are to be shared between said first user's and said one of said at least one of additional user's computing systems, and wherein directing said first software agent and said at least one additional software agent is based on at least one criterion.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 13, further comprising ~~wherein said agent server receives a list of available files to be shared from said first user's and said at least~~

~~one additional user's computing systems when said first user's and said at least one additional user's computing systems log in to said network environment.~~

requesting a file, wherein a file request is sent from said first software agent; and
sending the requested file directly from said at least one additional software agent to
said first software agent.

15. (Cancelled) The method of Claim 13, further comprising the step of requesting by said first user from said agent server a file request wherein said agent server matches said request to at least one additional software agent having said requested file.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~45~~13, wherein ~~said~~ directing said first software agent and said at least one additional software agent is ~~match~~ is based on firewall type, subnet, network or non-USA country code, and/or connection speed in order to minimize file transfer time between said first software agent and said at least one additional software agent.

17. (Original) The method of Claim 13, wherein said agent server directs said first user's software agent to open a port on said first user's computing system to listen for a connection and file request from said at least one additional user's computing systems, and directs said at least one additional user's computing system to connect to said first user's computer system.

18. (Original) The method of Claim 13, wherein said agent server directs said at least one additional user's software agent to open a port on said at least one additional user's computing system to listen for a connection and file request from said first user's computing systems, and directs said first user's computing system to connect to said at least one additional user's computer system.

19. (Original) The method of Claim 18, wherein if said at least one additional user's computing system receives an unexpected connection attempt or file request/transfer said open port is closed.

20. (Currently Amended) A system for exchanging files in a network environment, comprising:

a first software agent executed on a first user's computing system, wherein said first user makes a file request via a GUI linked to a web server coupled to server system;

at least one additional software agent ~~executed~~ executing on at least one additional users computing system; and

an agent server, executed on said server system, to which said first software agent and said at least one additional software agent establish a connection when said first user's and said at least one additional user's computing systems log in to said network environment, and wherein said agent server directs said first software agent and said at least one additional software agent to establish a direct connection between said first user's and one of said at least one additional user's computing systems when files are to be shared between said first user's and said one of said at least one additional user's computing systems, and wherein said agent server receives a list of available files to be shared from said first user's and said at least one additional user's computing systems when said first user's and said at least one additional user's computing systems log in to said network environment, and wherein when said agent server receives a file request from said first user, said agent server matches said request to at least one additional software agent having said requested file, and wherein directing said first software agent and said at least one additional software agent ~~said match~~ is based on firewall type, subnet, network or non-USA country code, and/or connection speed in order to minimize file transfer time between said first software agent and said at least one additional software agent.